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Looting the Looters: The Paradox of Anti-Corruption Crusades in Nigeria's Fourth Republic (1999-2014)

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Abstract

The ubiquitous nature of corruption in Nigeria's political boulevard has been a cogged wheel that backpedal developmental liberation in the country. Consequently, Nigerian government embarked on major reform that led to the creation of Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) to eliminate the scars of corruption in Nigeria's political map during Olusegun Obasanjo's regime. However, the anti-corruption institution has received a lot of criticism among the general populace in Nigeria. The agency has been accused of politicization, selective operation, lack of transparency and as an instrument of political persecution. Therefore, this study investigates to what extent Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) becomes a political device in the hand of politicians in facilitating further looting and persecuting political enemies. The paper argues that various regimes in Nigeria's fourth republic, ranging from Olusegun Obasanjo's administration (1999-2007), Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's regime (2007-2010) and Goodluck Jonathan's political dispensation (2010-2014) employed anti-corruption agency as a shield to foster corruption and persecute political opposition. Drastic measures are suggested for the efficiency, effectiveness and absolute autonomy of the agency in Nigeria.

Key words: Corruption; Anti-corruption; Democracy; Politics; Fourth republic; EFCC; Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION

Various studies have reconnoitred what corruption should connote across socio-political borders (Bayart et al., 1999, p.66; Szeftel, 2000; Bracking, 2007; Amadi & Ekekwe, 2014; Chabal & Daloz, 1999; Brooks et al., 2013). Cultural variation, societal beliefs and surreptitious nature of its practices have cornered universally acceptable understanding of the concept (Agbiboa, 2010). What is termed as corrupt practices in many societies repudiates African philosophical acceptance, embedded in societal norms, customs, and tradition. For instance, "in India giving presents and gratuities to government officers is an indispensable courtesy and a respectable, civilized way of carrying on business" (Bayley, 1966, p.721). Similarly, in the Republic of Niger, presentation of a gift to traditional chiefs is considered as an element of morality and generosity that may add values to individual personality (Sardan, 1999, p.39). Conversely, this form of gratuities is tagged as an element of corruption in western political philosophy; it is in line with the above that Bayley (1966, p.721) argued that, many definitions that have been promulgated reflects Western hybridity. As a result of non-universality in its practices create problematic environment indefining the concept, and therefore, raises inexorable argument among intellectuals (USIP, 2010).

Despite the divergence views among scholars, corruption has its origin from Latin words "corruptus" meaning, to destroy or deteriorate (Perry, 1997). Corruption implies abuse of delegated power for personal advantage (Transparency International, 2015); it is an abuse when public office holder sways public policies by collecting bribes for self-increase (World Bank, 1997). "Corruption is an institutionalized system of nature/society interaction forged from state authority and molded around local social power through systems of social capital formation" (Robbins, 2000, p.423); revolving around extortion, embezzlement, nepotism, bribery and state capture (UNDP, 2010); demonstrating breach of legal

principles for personal accumulation as well as application of political power to secure jobs for the members of the family, political supporters and people from the same ethnic origin (Sen, 1999, p.275; Asobie, 2012, p.7), at the detriment of the general populace (Lipset & Lenz, 2000, pp.112-114).

Corruption is a primordial societal idiosyncrasy, prevailing from ancient Greece, Rome, Israel, and Egypt to the modern-day (Lipset & Lenz, 2000, pp.112-113). Existing in both developed and developing nations, including public sector, private organization, and international agencies (Enweremadu, 2010). Few countries are immune of the problem (Coldham, 1995); serving as an impediment to development with variance implications across the nations of the world (World Bank, 1997; Economic Commission for Africa, 2009; Heilbrunn, 2004; United Nation, 2004). Globally, it is estimated that chronic corruption has resulted in loss of \$2.6 trillion annually (OECD, 2014).

The Nigeria's social construction and political architecture accommodate corruption due to institute clientelistic and patron relations, embedded in ethnic schism; implying diversion of public funds by the patrons for redistribution among clients. In this context, informal institutional network serves as a riding board for corrupt practices (Smith, 2010, p.6); consequently, leads to Neo-patrimonial state in the country (Transparency International, 2014). As a result of endemic corruption in Nigeria, the country was highly rated as one of the most corrupt country in the world (Transparency International, 2014); accordingly, Nigeria's bad reputation at the global level necessitates the creation of anti-corruption agency during Olusegun Obasanjo administration (Enweremadu, 2006; Igbuzor, 2008). The regime proclaimed the Corrupt Practice Act (CPA) 2000 as an enacted law codified to investigate and prosecute alleged corrupt persons (Economic Commission for Africa, 2010). However, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) which was lumbered to safeguard the public treasury has received a lot of criticism from the people (Igbuzor, 2008); the agency has convexed to the whims and caprices of politicians, piloted towards promoting public looting in Nigeria. Despite the creation of anti-corruption institution by the political regime of Olusegun Obasanjo, corruption continued to sway Nigeria's political system (Mohammed, 2013); the institutions has been facing various challenges, centred on lack of independent, poor legislation, judicial ineptitude and politicization (Human Right Watch, 2011; Pope & Vogl, 2000; Aibieyi, 2007). Therefore, the Nigerian anti-corruption crusades are regarded as a feeble illusion in prosecuting corrupt politicians and public officials (BBC, 2011).

In order to examine the salient issues that emanates from the above background, this study therefore explores historiographical political trend of corruption in Nigeria's

fourth republic, starting from Olusegun Obasanjo's administration (1999-2007), Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's regime (2007-2010) and the Goodluck Jonathan's political era (2010-2014). It makes comparative studies of corruption in the three political regimes as well as evaluating the level of corruption in Nigeria's fourth republic. It further assesses the effectiveness of Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and to what extent the agency becomes a protective tool for the looters and also as a device for political persecution in Nigeria.

1. THE CHARACTER OF NIGERIAN STATE

Nigeria is characterized as a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, the amalgamation of the various ethnic groups was actualized by the British colonialists in 1914. (Sampson, 2014). According to Otite (1990, pp.44-57), the country was problematized with over 300 ethnic groups, this structure serves as a foundation for Nigeria's socio-political construction. Okome (2005, p.92) argues that the excessive utilization of ethnicity and regional division employed by the British colonialists to exploit economic resources and political hegemony over the local citizens has fashioned Nigeria's political trajectory. At the departure of colonizers, the existing socio-political structure put in place which was shrouded in racial, religious and ethnic diversities remain a dais for political occupation in the country; consequently, leads to ethnic suspicion, communal and religious violence in the country (Peters, 1997, pp.32-33); with its reflection in national political processes (Sampson, 2014).

In the post-colonial epoch, those that championed Nigerian independent were appointed to steer Nigeria's political affairs. When the national political order was restored, the selfish interest of Nigerian political elites was promoted by accumulating wealth for personal use, while neglecting the general welfare of the people (Fadakinte, 2013). The Nigerian political elites relied on the manipulative colonial structure to maintain political relevance in the post-colonial regime (Dibua, 2006). They employed ethnic strategy to seek electoral victories, security contracts, appointments and serves as a platform for promotion in public and private organizations. The larger percentage of the Nigerian populace relies on ethnic affiliation in securing admission in a higher institution of learning and the selection of political contestants is also based on ethnic institution rather than a political party platform (Osaghae, 1998, p.15).

Similarly, Uzonwanne (2011, p.2) highlights that the Nigerian state character exemplifies three fundamental principles, including ethnicity, social unrest, and civilian democracies guided by former military dictators. In the same vein, Osaghae (2003) contends that the nature of Nigeria's politics since independence is centered on manipulation of ethnicity and religious organizations to

gain political support. Therefore generates social unrest and ethnic conflicts in the country. He furthers that petrol-politics as another factor fuelling Nigeria's institutional failures. Ejimudo (2014) postulates that Nigeria's state can be considered as a "rentier state" caged in a monolithic economy. Despite the abundance natural resources, the country is rated as one of the poorest state in the world (Omeje, 2006). As a result of the privatization of the state by the political elites to foster their political occupation through manipulation of ethnic violence, has therefore, moribund socio-economic development in the country (Ihonvbere, 2008). The petty-bourgeoisies serve as the dominants in Nigerian political affairs, consequently, creating class structure between the few citizens who are profiting from the state resources and the larger masses (Shaapera, 2012, p.25).

Over the years, the polarization of the country into three regions in 1946 by the Richard constitution intensified ethnic and regional consciousness in Nigeria's politics (Afigbo, 1991, p.29). Following this period, politics in Nigeria becomes a regional issue rather than national course, the intensity of ethnic and regional dilemma sprang up in 1953 during the formation of political parties, the three parties were created, namely, NPC, AG, and NCNC. They were fashioned on the platform of regional interests. Each political party was associated with a region, that is, the North, West and East (Echezona, 1987, p.20). Moreover, in the first republic, ethnicity was exacerbated to promote regional interest; the political epoch experienced major ethnic upheaval and political killings which led to military takeover from the civilian regime of Sir Tafawa Balewa, the first Nigerian Prime Minister. Despite the military intervention in Nigeria's political affairs, the military governance was entrapped in tribalism, ethnicity, nepotism, religious sentiment and civil war that lasted for three years. Ethnicity was employed to perpetrate major coup d'état in the country throughout the military governance in the country (Shenge, 2004, p.199). A theoretical perspective suggests that the collapsed of the democratic regime in the first Republic was certified by regionalism and tribalistic weapons executed by the political elites to promote personal interest (Diamond, 1998, p.16).

After the long years of authoritarian political control, the country returned to democratic system in 1999, the period marked people's anticipation for positive socio-political and economic development in the country. Various strategies were embraced to resolve ethnic competition among the diverse social groups; these include federal character, zoning, and political rotation to promote inter-ethnic relations and equitable distribution of national resources in the country. However, the above political devices were hijacked by the political elites to promote corruption and regional accumulation (Azeez, 2004, p.327).

In the third republic, reliance on ethnicity to gain political support was ensnared in a fiasco; the instrument witnessed a total failure in Nigeria's polity. The political environment disappointed Mallam Bashir Tofa, A northern Nigerian presidential candidate who contested under the political platform of National Republican Convention (NRC), he contested against M. K. O. Abiola, who hailed from western Nigeria and sole candidate of Social Democratic Party (SDP); it was declared that M. K. O. Abiola won in Kano state which serves as the strong hold Mallam Bashir Tofa, and he was also declared winner of the presidential election. However, the democratic aspiration was aborted by the military; this is as a result of class struggle and selfish interest of the military officers and political gladiators (Monday, 2010, p.131).

The fourth republic started with the emergence of Major General Olusegun Obasanjo (Rtd), Obasanjo contested in the 1999 presidential election under the political auspices of People's Democratic Party (PDP) against Olu Falae who contested under the Alliance for Democracy (AD), a political party that belongs to the Yorubas in the Western Nigeria. However, Olusegun Obasanjo was massively supported by the Northerners, the reason behinds political acceptance of Obasanjo in the Northern Nigeria dominated by Muslim is traceable to his role in 1979 when he handed-over power to Alhaji Shehu Shagari, a Northerner against Obafemi Awolowo, a Yoruba man. The Hausas voted him as a result of historical and political support he rendered for Alhaji Shehu Shagari (former president) and trusts they have in him (Ako-Nai, 2004, p.379). However, a school of thought offers explanation regarding the emergence of Olusegun Obasanjo, it argues that the former president belongs to military class, and this serves as a basis for his political conquest (Monday, 2010, p.131). Hence, it can be validated that ethnicity and class struggle serves as a potent weapon in the hand of political elites to achieve political supports in Nigeria. The above explanation offers how ethnicity was exploited by the political elites to promote personal and regional interests. It was employed to accomplish political support among the people. Therefore, the political institution serves as a platform to pay back political supporters and ethnic cronies in the country. Thus, the next section explores how various regimes in Nigeria's fourth republic looted the public treasury and the strategies they employed in achieving personal accumulation. It delves into historical perspective of corruption in Nigeria's fourth republic, journeyed through Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007), Umaru Musa Yar Adua (2007-2010) and Goodluck Jonathan's administration (2010-2015); while also considering manifestation of corruption from executive, legislative and judicial arms of government in the country.

Table 1
Looted Funds by Government Officials Discovered in Foreign Bank

Names of depositors	London	SWISS	USA	Germany
Former Military President Ibrahim Babangida	£6.256billion	\$7.41billion	\$2.00 billion	Dm9.00
Former Military President Abubakar	£1.31billion	\$2.33billion	\$8.00million	_____
Admiral Mike Akhigbe	£1.24billion	\$2.42billion	\$671million	_____
General Jerry Useni	£3.04billion	\$2.01billion	\$1.01billion	_____
Alhaji. Ismalia	£1.03billion	\$2.00billion	\$1.30billion	Dm1billion
Gwarzo	_____	_____	_____	_____
AlhajiUmaru Dikko	£5.01billion	\$1.4billion	\$700million	_____
Paul Ogwuma	£300million	\$1.142billion	\$200million	Dm700million
Former Military President Sani Abacha	£600million	\$4.09billion	\$800million	Dm345million
Mohammed Abacha	£400million	_____	_____	Dm500million
Abdukadir Abacha	£1.12billion	\$1.2billion	\$150 million	Dm3.01million
Alhaji Wada Nas	£2.5billion	\$1.21billion	\$900million	Dm535million
Tom Ikimi	£600million	\$1.32billion	\$153million	Dm471million
Dan Etete	£2.9billion	\$1.39billion	\$400million	Dm300million
Dan Eliebet	-----	\$1.03billion	\$700million	Dm371million
Major Al Mustapha	£2.3billion	\$1.06billion	\$360million	Dm1.72million
Tony Anininh	£700million	\$1.001billion	\$161million	Dm361m
Basir Dahatu	£300million	\$1.09billion	\$700million	Dm1.66million
Alhaji.Hassan Adamu	£120million	\$200million	_____	Dm1.42 billion
T. Y. Danfuma	-----	\$1.02billion	-----	-----
General Ishaya	_____	\$800million	_____	Dm190 million
Bamayi	_____	_____	_____	_____

Source: *Newswatch Magazine*, May 19, 2008.

The above table shows various authoritarian regimes that have ruled the country. It further showcased the high level of corruption before Nigeria returned to democratic dispensation. Therefore, the trends of political corruption from 1999-2014 are examined in the following sections.

2. OLUSEGUN OBASANJO'S ADMINISTRATION AND THE CREATION OF ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CRIMES COMMISSION (EFCC) (1999 -2007)

To understand the underlying principle that triggered the creation of Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and how it was stage-managed to foster corruption between 1999-2007, it is essential to fathom the various structures put in place to combat corruption by the past political regimes. In the past, various political regimes have enunciated modalities to curb corruption. A classic example include political leadership of General Murtala Muhammed's (1975-1976) sequestration of looted properties accumulated by Nigerians; the code of conduct bureau established by Shehu Shagari's administration (1979-1983) for ethical practice among public servants;

Muhammadu Buhari's war against indiscipline (1983-1885) and General Ibrahim Babangida's (1985-1993) social mobilization movement. These exertions were various political efforts to eliminate corruption in Nigeria's socio-political terrain.

After 16 years interminable military governance, democracy returned to Nigeria, midwifed by General Abdulsalam Abubakar, who served as the last military dictator in the country. General Abubakar embarked on democratic transition by organizing electoral institution towards accomplishing democratic pragmatism (Aka, 2012, p.30). The formation of political parties marked the beginning of democratic quest with the emergence of party such as People's Democratic Party (PDP), Alliance for Democracy (AD) and All People's Party (APP). All political detainees were also freed by General Abubakar including those that have been sentenced to death, as part of political amnesty program (Alao, 2013, p.480). Elections were conducted while People's Democratic Party (PDP) emerged as presidential winner, Olusegun Obasanjo, who served as the flag bearer of the party, therefore, appeared as the first Democratic President in Nigeria's fourth republic (David et al., 2014, p.98). According to Ukase & Audu (2015, p.172), the

democratic transition resuscitated citizen's hope, yearning and aspiration for better Nigeria. Conversely, the euphoria was curtailed by political high-handedness, lack of transparency and corruption; thus, exemplified political scenario in Nigeria's fourth republic (Ukase & Audu, 2015, p.172). Olusegun Obasanjo's administration was inaugurated on 29th of May 1999. It marked the beginning of new regime and another democratic transition in Nigeria. The former president recognizes the challenge of corruption in the country's political institutions, hence, pledged commitment to redeem Nigeria's image at regional and among the nations of the world (Enweremadu, 2006).

In 1999, the sensitivity of former President Olusegun Obasanjo regarding Nigeria's rating by Transparency International as second most corrupt nations in the world and its implication on foreign investment and

diplomatic relations triggered his pursuit to combat corruption in the country (Ekweremadu, 2010). This effort aimed to fascinate foreign investment in Nigeria; thus, led to the creation of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Act 2002 (Obuah, 2010, p.31; Raimi et al., 2013). The EFCC was authorized to investigate and prosecute the corrupt public individual and private institutions especially on money laundering in the country (EFCC, 2014). During Obasanjo's political administration, Nuhu Ribadu was appointed as the chairman of EFCC, his appointment acknowledged a new beginning in resolving an age long problem of corruption in Nigeria. Several political office holders and private individuals were alleged of misappropriation and embezzlement of public funds. The table below reveals the alleged financial scandals stage-manage by the political elites:

Table 2
An Account of Corruption During Olusegun Obasanjo's Administration (1999-2007)

Name	Allegation	Position	Amount
Bode George	Misappropriation and Embezzlement	Former Chairman Nigerian Port Authority (NPA)	84 billion Naira
Mohammed Goje	Embezzlement	Gombe State Governor	US\$82 million
Gbenga Daniel	Embezzlement	Ogun State Governor	US\$372 million
Adebayo Alao-Akala	Embezzlement	Oyo State Governor	US\$372 million
Alhaji Aliyu Akwe Doma	Embezzlement	Governor of Nassarawa State	(\$115 million
Tafa Balogun	Money laundering	Former inspector-General of Police	US\$130 million
Sunday Afolabi	Embezzlement	Former Minister of Interior	81.4 billion Naira
Arthur Nzeribe	Bribery	Former Senate President	300 million Naira
Orji Uzor Kalu	Arraigned on 107 state Counts	Former governor of Anambra State	5 billion Naira
James Ibori	Arraigned on 170 state Counts	Former governor of Delta State	N9.2 Billion
Olusegun Obasanjo	Unconstitutional withdrawal of funds from federation account	Former president of Nigeria	2.1 billion
Olusegun Obasanjo	Misappropriation	Former president of Nigeria	\$16 billion
Olusegun Obasanjo	Bribery to elongate his tenure (The National Assembly members were bribed to pass a law for extension of his political tenure popularly known as Third Term Agenda)	Former president of Nigeria	23.45 billion naira
Olusegun Obasanjo	Illegal acquisition of shares	Former president of Nigeria	200 million Naira
Olusegun Obasanjo	Raising of funds while in office for personal accumulation (construction of private library)	Former president of Nigeria	8.5 billion Naira
Peter Odili	Arraigned on 170 state counts	Former governor of Delta State	6.2billion
Adolphus Wabara	Bribery (He was alleged of collecting bribe from Minister of Education, Prof Febian Osuji purposely to pass Ministry of education budget)	Former Senate President	55 million Naira

To be continued

Continued

Name	Allegation	Position	Amount
Diepreye Alamieyeseigha	Money Laundering	Former governor of Bayelsa State	\$55 million
Professor Fabian Osuji	Bribery (He was alleged of bribing Senate President mainly to pass ministry of education budget)	former minister of education	55 million Naira
Chimaroke Nnamani	Arraigned on 105 state counts	The former governor of Enugu State	5.3 billion Naira
Evans Enwerem, Chuba Okadigbo, Gbenga Aluko, Haruna Abubakar, Samaila Mamman	Inflation of contract	The first two are Former Senate Presidents while others are former Senators	917 million Naira
Rowland Owie	Inflation of contract	Former Senator and Chief Whip of National Assembly	USD 125,000
Salisu Buhari	Certificate forgery	Former speaker of House of Representative	—
Justice Charles Archibong	Lack of procedural value in delivering judgment	Retire judge of Federal High Court, Lagos	-----
Hon. Justice Okwuchukwu Opene	Bribery	Former judge of Court of Appeal	15 million Naira
Hon. Justice David Adedoyin Adeniji	Bribery	Former judge of Court of Appeal	12 million Naira
Ayo Fayose	51 state counts	The present governor of Ekiti State	1.2 Billion
Joshua Dariye	Arraigned on 14 state counts	Former governor of Plateau State	700 Million Naira
Saminu Turaki	Arraigned on 32 state counts	Former governor of Jigawa State	36 Billion Naira

Source: Author's Compilation

The above table showcases prevalence of corruption during Obasanjo's political epoch. Even, the state governors are not immune to looting the public treasury. Various accounts of financial misappropriation, embezzlement, and misuse of state resources are analyzed in the table. According to Nwagwu (2014), in the legislative chamber, "corruption in the National Assembly includes what they call constituency projects that they give to their cronies for execution but invariably full payment is made with little or no job done". Hence, National Assembly was epitomized as "an assembly of the looters", "rogues and arm robbers" (*The Sun Newspaper*, 2014; *The Punch Newspaper*, 2012), and therefore becomes modus operandi of the political system. Correspondently, "If the Judiciary becomes corrupt, where is the hope of the nation? Justice, no doubt, will go to the highest bidder" (*The Punch Newspaper*, 2012). "When it became clear that the courts became intimidated and subjected to the manipulation of the political process, resulting in contradictory decisions and orders by courts of coordinate jurisdiction, then the entire political system

was in clear danger" (*National Daily Newspaper*, 2014). Buttressing the above statement, the case of former Governor of Bayelsa state illuminates an impeccable depiction of Nigerian judicial system. The former Governor was vindicated during his trial in Nigeria; however, similar evidence was utilized to prosecute him in the United Kingdom (*The Punch Newspaper*, 2012). It can, therefore, be argued that the regime of Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007) was an embellishment of corruption; the typology of corruption associated with Obasanjo's political administration includes extortion, certificate forgery, inflation of contracts, application of political incumbency to influence personal project, illegal acquisition of properties, abuse of office, misappropriation, embezzlement and bribery (Audu & Osuala, 2013, pp.12-14; *Vanguard Newspaper*, 2012; BBC News, 2005; *Punch Newspaper*, 2013; *Premium Times*, 2013; *The Sun Newspaper*, 2014; *The Punch Newspaper*, 2012; Nwagwu, 2014). Moreover, the judiciary that should have been the last hope of the common man was hijacked by the political juggernauts in the country. "Today, there

is no institution of government that is not riddled with corruption, not even the military. As the people cry out, where then is the salvation” (*The Sun Newspaper*, 2014). In this regard, the citizens’ hope has been betrayed; the three arms of government (executive, legislature, and judiciary) have merged to form impious ally in a bid to preserve looting of public funds in Nigeria.

3. CORRUPTION TREND IN MUSA YAR ADUA’S POLITICAL REGIME (2007-2010)

After the failure of third term bid engineered by former President Olusegun Obasanjo, elections were conducted in April 2007, the conduct of the elections were marred by irregularities and fraud, including vote buying, under-age voting, intimidation of voters and snatching of ballot boxes; both local and international election observers claimed that the elections were far-fetched from international standard. Despite numerous criticisms, Umaru Musa Yaradua was declared a winner in the

presidential election. The election was further challenged by the opposition party at Supreme Court; the verdicts of the apex Court ruled in favour of former late President Umaru Musa Yar’Adua (Kurtzleben, 2009). The former president, Olusegun Obasanjo relinquished power to Umaru Musa Yar’adua on May 29, 2007. Paradoxically, the late President publicly declared that election that brought him to power was flawed and fraudulent. Moreover, one of the allegations of corruption against late President Umaru Musa Yar’adua was his connection with ex-governors who have been entrenched as corrupt. These include James Ibori, the former governor of Delta State, Alamieyeseigha, the prosecuted governor of Bayelsa State; while nominated Sam Egwu, the former Governor of Ebonyi State as a Minister of Education. The ex-culprits were also nominated for 2009 national award by the former President (Ekeremadu, 2010, p.19). The table below reveals the determined cases of corruption during the political regime of former President Umaru Musa Yar’Aradua.

Table 3
Cases of Political Corruption Under Umaru Musa Yar’Aradua’s (2007-2010)

Name	Allegation	Position	Amount
Mrs Olubunmi Eteh	Misappropriation and embezzlement	Former Speaker of House of Representative	5 million Dollars
Gabriel Aduku	Arraigned on 56 state counts	Former Minister of Health	300 million Naira
Hon. T. Faniyi, Albert Soje & Others	Arraigned on 30 count charge	The first serves as former Kogi state Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy and the second person is former Commissioner of Agriculture in Kogi state	3 billion Naira
Jolly Nyame	Arraigned on 21 state counts	Former Governor of Taraba State	180 million
Francis Okokuro	Arraigned on 6 count charge	Former Bayelsa State Accountant General	2.4 Billion Naira
Lucky Igbiniedion	Arraigned on 191 count charge	Former Governor, Edo State	4.3 billion Naira
Kenny Martins	Arraigned on 28 count charge	Police Equipment Fund	7,740 Billion Naira
Attahiru Bafarawa	Arraigned on 47 count charge.	Former Governor of Sokoto State	15 billion Naira
Gabriel Aduku	Arraigned on 56 count charge	Former Minister of Health	300 million Naira
Michael Botmang	Arraigned on 31 count charge	Former Plateau State Governor	1.5 billion Naira
Prof. Babalola Borishade	Arraigned on 11 count charge	Former Minister of Aviation	5.6 billion Naira
Nyeson Wike	Arraigned on state count charge	Former Minister of Education, and Chief of Staff to Governor of Rivers State. He is also the present Governor of River State	4.670 Billion Naira

To be continued

Continued

Name	Allegation	Position	Amount
Adenike Grange	Arraigned on 56 state count charge	Former Minister of Health	300 Million Naira
Boni Haruna	Arraigned on 47 state counts	Former Governor, Adamawa State	250 million Naira
Nicholas Ugbade	Arraigned on 158 count charge	Former Member of House of Representatives	5.2 billion Naira
Mallam Nasir El-Rufai	Abuse of office	Former Minister of Federal Capital Territory	_____
Adamu Abdullahi	Arraigned on 149 count charge	Former Gov of Nasarawa State	15 billion Naira
Roland Iyayi	Arraigned on 11 count charge	Former Managing Director of FAAN	5.6 billion Naira
Femi Fani Kayode	Arraigned on 47 state counts	Former Minister of Aviation	250 million Naira
Rasheed Ladoja	Arraigned on 33 count charge	Former Governor of Oyo State	6 billion Naira
Professor Innocent Chuka Okonkwo, Uchechi Nwugo and Wilfred Uwakwe	Arraigned on 14 state counts	The first person is the Vice Chancellor of Imo state University	N145 Million
Ndudi Elumelu	Arraigned on 158 state counts	Former Member of House of Representative	5.2 billion Naira
Hamman Bello Hammed	Arraigned on 46 state counts	Former Comptroller General of Nigerian Customs	N2.5 Billion Naira
Chief Joe Musa, Olusegun Ogumba, Chinedu Obi, Oparagu Elizabeth, Kweku Tandoh	Arraigned on 12 state counts	The first is the former Director General of National Gallery of Art, while others are Directors of the same institution	1.012 Billion Naira
Dr Yuguda Manu Kaigama	Arraigned on 37 state counts	Chairman, Taraba State Civil Service Commission	17 Million Naira
Dr Albert Ikomi	Arraigned on 4 state counts	Retired Permanent Secretary	43 Million Naira
Tom Iseghohi, Muhammed Buba, Mike Okoli	Arraigned on 32 state counts	General Manager & Managers of Transcorp Group PLC	15 Billion Naira
Dr Ransome Owan, Mr. Abdulrahman Ado, Mr. Adulrasak Alimi, Mr. Onwuamaeze Iloeje, Mrs Grace Eyoma, Mr. Mohammed Bunu, Mr. Abimbola Odubiyi	Arraigned on 196 state counts	They include chairman and 6 commissioners of Nigeria Electricity Regulatory Commission	1.5 billion Naira
Dr Aliyu Abdullahi	Arraigned on 158 state counts	Former Federal Permanent Secretary	5.2 billion Naira
Hon. Paulinus Igwe	Arraigned on 158 state counts	Former Members of House of Representative	5.2 billion Naira
Iyabo Obasanjo-Bello	Arraigned on 56 state counts	Former Senator	10 million naira
Rasheed Ladoja	Arraigned on 33 state counts	Former Governor of Oyo State	6 billion naira
James Ibori	Arraigned on 170 state counts	Former Governor of Delta State	6.2 billion naira

Source: Author's Compilation.

In the above table, the nature of corruption during Yar'Aradua's political aeon manifests in embezzlement, misappropriation, bribery and inflation of contracts in Nigeria. One of the issues to be raised regarding the political interference in anti-corruption campaign during the political regime of late Umaru Musa Yar'Aradua was the case of James Ibori who served as a political associate of the late President; Ibori was indicted by the former Chairman of EFCC, Nuhu Ribadu. It is against this backdrop that anti-corruption Czar was fired by the late Umaru Musa Yar'Aradua (Okechukwu & Inya, 2011, p.50). Therefore, it becomes difficult for anti-corruption agency to be successful in a political environment where the constitutional power in appointing and dismissing the chairman lies on the coffer of the President.

4. POLITICAL CORRUPTION DURING GOODLUCK JONATHAN'S REGIME

After the death of President Musa Yaradua on 5th of May 2010, another election was conducted in 2011 to restore the vacuum created by the late president. Goodluck Jonathan emerged as the winner of the presidential election, and he was sworn in May 2010 (BBC News, 2010). Under Jonathan's administration, numerous cases of corruption were bared without any deliberate efforts by the government to prosecute the culprits. His regime was christened as most corrupt in the political history of Nigeria (*Premium Times*, 2012). The table below reveals numerous political office holders that were alleged of corruption.

Table 4
Cases of Political Corruption Under Goodluck Jonathan's Regime

Name	Position	Allegation	Amount
Stella Oduah	Former Minister of Aviation	Misappropriation and Inflation of Contract	643 million
Goodluck Jonathan	Former President of Nigeria	Illegal contract	US\$15 million
Abdulasheed Maina, B. G. Kaigama, John Yusuf	The first person is the Chairman of Pension Task Force Team (PTFT) while other are member of the committee	Misappropriation and embezzlement	195 billion Naira
Farouk Lawan	Member of House of Representative	Bribery	\$620,000
Adenike Grange	Former Minister of Health	56 state counts	300 million Naira

Source: Author's Compilation.

The above table reveals numerous financial scandals orchestrated by political elites during the political administration of Goodluck Jonathan. The missing US\$20 billion from the account of Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) reported by former Governor of Central Bank, Lamido Sanusi can be considered in the historiography of corruption in Nigeria (BBC News, 2014). Thus, the Governor of Central Bank was forced to resign by the president as a result of disclosure of misappropriation of funds in the governance system (BBC, 2014). Furthermore, The procurement of two armoured cars and other 27 vehicles were inflated from N255 million to N643 million by Minister of Aviation, Stella Oduah which generates a lot of criticism also symbolizes various acts of misappropriation under the political leadership of Goodluck Jonathan (*The Punch Newspaper*, 2013).

In another related accusation, President Goodluck was alleged in an arms deal scandal, US\$15 million cash was discovered in a private jet in South Africa. It was claimed that the money was meant for arms dealing between Nigeria and South Africa; conversely, the government of South Africa denied its involvement in any deal

with Nigeria government. All efforts to investigate the fraud at the legislative chamber were frustrated by the political party in power (*Premium Time*, 2015). Sharing of government properties also characterized Jonathan's political administration, immediately after he lost 2015 presidential election, a building that was allocated to Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) in Abuja was sold-off to Assistant Commissioner of Police (ADC), Uche Ifeanyi, other government properties located in urban districts such as Victoria Island, Apapa, Ikoyi and Ikeja in Lagos state were shared among the president cronies and political associates (IRNG, 2015).

Moreover, Abdulasheed Maina, the presiding officer of the Pension Reform Task Team (PRTT) who was appointed to embark on a major reform of corrupted pension scheme was also averred of looting 195 billion naira. The allegation revolves around illegal transaction that fetched him 100 million naira monthly. He was accused of opening numerous bank accounts in both his name and his brother's name (*The Punch Newspaper*, 2013).

Jonathan's political administration has also revealed disinclination for institutional reform in the country. Some

of the looters who are still under probe were honoured by the former president, the conferment of national honour that includes several corrupt political elements, fraudsters, and ex-convicts. The most controversial bestowment of national honours are late General Sani Abacha, former military president, Mr. Diepreye Alamieyesiegha, the former Bayelsa State governor, late General Abdulkareem Adisa, General Staff to late Sani Abacha, General Oladipo Diya; former Minister of Communications General Tajudeen Olanrewaju among others (*National Mirrors Newspaper*, 2013); it was on this basis that Professor Wole Soyinka Noted that “by honouring Abacha, President Goodluck Jonathan’s administration had ridiculed Nigeria in the presence of world leaders by glorifying murderers and thieves” (*The Punch Newspaper*, 2014). Additionally, The egregious subterfuge of corruption was proclaimed by his regime in which he states publicly that “over 70% of what are called corruption (cases), even by Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and other anti-corruption agencies, are not corruption, but common stealing,” (*Leadership Newspaper*, 2015). This statement, therefore, substantiates the high level of corruption during Jonathan’s political regime.

Among the member of the legislative arm, the misappropriation and embezzlement of pension funds which involve the Chairman of Pension Task Force Team (PTFT), Abdurashed Maina and other committee member including B.G. Kaigama and John Yusuf (Nigeria Intel, 2012). The Chairman of the House Committee on the management of the fuel subsidy, Farouk Lawan was caught in a bribery scandal. He was entrapped in a video collecting bribe, totalled \$620,000 from Femi Otedola, the executive director of Zenon oil. It was revealed that the lawmaker demanded US\$3 million purposely to delist the name of the company from indicted companies in Nigeria. Therefore, US\$620,000 serves as part of the instalment agreed by both parties (Falola & Oyeniyi, 2015, p.278; *The Punch Newspaper*, 2012). Thus, executive recklessness, bribery scandal, misappropriation of public resources, embezzlement, illegal contracts and lack of transparency and contextual analysis in government spending shaped political administration of former

President Goodluck Jonathan. The corrupt practices in Jonathan’s regime was so unique that the three arms of governments namely; executive, legislature and judiciary formed alliance in looting public resources as well as honouring former looters by the government in power. Hence, it can be recognized that the quest and adoption of democratic governance may not guarantee corruption free society, as it was evident in Nigeria’s fourth republic. It can be argued that organized democratic structures aimed to safeguard Nigeria’s political environment have become an instrument for personal accumulation. Therefore, Nigerian political elites have trampled on the sacrosanct and ethical standard of democratic values. The legislative arm which should be responsible for law-making has been hijacked by corrupt individuals; while the judiciary that should have been the last hope of ordinary citizens has also been embroiled in misappropriation, bribery, extortion and all sorts of corruption. In this regard, justice becomes an exclusive preserve for the highest bidders in Nigeria.

Table 5
Comparative Analysis of the Nature of Corruption in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic 1999-2014

Regime	Year	Nature of corruption
Olusegun Obasanjo	1999-2007	Election rigging, abuse of office, Embezzlement misappropriation, bribery, inflation of contract, extortion, illegal acquisition of property
Umaru Musa Yar’Adua	2007-2010	Embezzlement misappropriation, bribery, inflation of contract, extortion, embezzlement
Goodluck Jonathan	2011-2016	Embezzlement misappropriation, bribery, inflation of contract, extortion

Source: Author’s Compilation.

The above table juxtaposed the three regimes of Olusegun Obasanjo, Umaru Musa Yar’Adua and Goodluck Jonathan; it shows identical nature of corruption in Nigeria’s fourth republic. In this context, the manners and trends of political corruption continue.

Table 6
Prosecuted Cases of Political Corruption Between 1999-2014

Names	Allegation	Position	Amount	Court verdicts
Saminu Turaki	Arraigned on 32 state counts	Former governor of Jigawa State	36 Billion Naira	Granted bail by court since 2007
Bode George	Misappropriation and Embezzlement	Former chairman Nigerian Port Authority (NPA)	85 billion Naira	Sentenced to 30 months jail
Orji Uzor Kalu	Arraigned on 107 state counts	Former governor of Anambra State	5 Billion Naira	Granted bail in 2008
James Ibori	Arraigned on 170 state counts	Former governor of Delta State	9.2 Billion Naira	Granted bail in 2008

To be continued

Continued

Names	Allegation	Position	Amount	Court verdicts
Ayo Fayose	51 state counts	The present Governor of Ekiti State	N1.2 billion	Granted bail by Court Since 2007
Joshua Dariye	Arraigned on 14 state counts.	Former Governor Plateau State	700 million	Granted bail by Court since 2007
Orji Uzor Kalu,	Arraigned on 107 state counts	Former Governor of Anambra State	5 billion Naira	Granted bail in 2008
James Ibori	Arraigned on 170 state counts	Former Governor, Delta State	9.2 Billion	Granted bail in 2008
Tafa Balogun	Money laundering	Former inspector-General of Police	US\$130 million	Convicted to 5 years jail
Chimaroke Nnamani	Arraigned on 105 state counts	The former Governor of Enugu State	5.3 billion Naira	Granted bail by Court since 2007
Ayo Fayose	51 state Counts	The present Governor of Ekiti State	1.2 billion	Granted bail by Court since 2007
Joshua Dariye	Arraigned on 14 state counts	Former Governor Plateau State	700 million	Granted bail by court since 2007
Saminu Turaki	Arraigned on 32 state counts	Former Governor of Jigawa State	36 billion Naira	Granted bail by Court since 2007
Gabriel Aduku	Arraigned on 56 state counts	Former Minister of Health	300 million Naira	Case determined in 2008
Hon. T. Faniyi, Albert Soje & others	Arraigned on 30 count charge	The first is former Kogi State Commissioner for local government while the other one served as commissioner for agriculture	3 billion Naira	Suspects arraigned on April 1 2010. Remanded in prison custody and later granted court
Jolly Nyame	Arraigned on 21 state counts	Former Governor of Taraba State	180 million Naira	Granted bail by Court in 2008
Francis Okokuro	Arraigned on 6 count charge	Former Bayelsa State Accountant General	2.4 billion Naira	Suspect Remanded in prison Custody
Lucky Igbiniedion	Arraigned on 191 count charge	Former Governor, Edo State	4.3 billion Naira	Granted bail by Court in 2008
Kenny Martins	Arraigned on 28 count charge	Police Equipment Fund	7,740 billion Naira	Granted bail by Court in 2008
Attahiru Bafarawa	Arraigned on 47 count charge	Former Governor of Sokoto State	15 billion Naira	Suspect remanded in prison custody and later granted bail by court. However, nothing was heard about the case again
Gabriel Aduku	Arraigned on 56 count charge	Former Minister of Health	300 million Naira	Granted bail in 2008
Michael Botmang	Arraigned on 31 count charge	Former Plateau State Governor	1.5 billion Naira	Granted bail in 2008
Prof. Babalola Borishade	Arraigned on 11 count charge	Former Minister of Aviation	5.6 billion Naira	Granted bail in 2008
Nyeson Wike	Arraigned on state count charge	Former Minister of Education, and Chief of Staff to Governor of Rivers State. He is also the present Governor of River State	4.670 billion Naira	Granted bail in 2008
Adenike Grange	Arraigned on 56 state count charge	Former Minister of Health	300 million Naira	Granted bail in 2008

Continued

Names	Allegation	Position	Amount	Court verdicts
Boni Haruna	Arraigned on 47 state counts	Former Governor, Adamawa State	250 million Naira	Granted bail in 2008
Nicholas Ugbade	Arraigned on 158 count charge	Former Member of House of Representatives	5.2 billion Naira	Remanded in Prison Custody and later granted bail Court in 2009
Mallam Nasir El-Rufai	Abuse of office	Former Minister of Federal Capital Territory	_____	Granted bail by Court in 2009
Adamu Abdullahi	Arraigned on 149 count charge	Former Gov of Nasarawa State	15 billion Naira	Granted bail by Court
Roland Iyayi	Arraigned on 11 count charge	Former Managing Director of FAAN	5.6 billion Naira	Granted bail by Court in 2008
Rasheed Ladoja	Arraigned on 33 count charge	Former Governor of Oyo State	6 billion Naira	Granted bail by Court in 2008
Professor Innocent Chuka Okonkwo, Uchechi	Arraigned on 14 state counts	The first person is the Vice Chancellor of Imo state University	145 million	Remanded in Kuje Prison and later granted bail by court in 2009
Ndudi Elumelu	Arraigned on 158 state counts	Former Member of House of Representative	5.2 billion Naira	Remanded in Prison Custody and later granted bail Court in 2009
Hamman Bello Hammed	Arraigned on 46 state counts	Former Comptroller General of Nigerian Customs	2.5 Billion Naira	Suspects Remanded in Kirikiri & Ikoyi Prisons and later Granted bail by court in 2009
Chief Joe Musa, Olusegun Ogumba, Chinedu Obi, Oparagu Elizabeth, Kweku Tandoh	Arraigned on 12 state counts	The first is the former Director General of National Gallery of Art, while others are Directors of the same institution	1.012 Billion Naira	Remanded in Kuje Prison and later Granted bail by court in 2009
Dr Yuguda Manu Kaigama,	Arraigned on 37 state counts	Chairman, Taraba State Civil Service Commission	17 Million Naira	Remanded in prison custody and later freed
Dr Albert Ikomi	Arraigned on 4 state counts	Retired permanent Secretary	43 Million Naira	Suspects Remanded in Ikoyi Prison and later Granted bail by court in 2009
Tom Iseghohi, Muhammed Buba, Mike Okoli	Arraigned on 32 state counts	General Manager & Managers of Transcorp Group PLC	15 billion Naira	Remanded in Kuje Prison and later granted bail by court in 2009
Dr Ransome Owan, Mr. Abdulrahman Ado, Mr. Adulrasak Alimi, Mr. Onwuamaeze Iloeje, Mrs Grace Eyoma, Mr. Mohammed Bunu, Mr. Abimbola Odubiyi	Arraigned on 196 state counts	They include chairman and 6 Commissioners of Nigeria Electricity Regulatory Commission	1.5 billion Naira	Granted bail in 2009
Dr Aliyu Abdullahi	Arraigned on 158 state counts	Former Federal Permanent Secretary	5.2 billion Naira	Remanded in Prison Custody and later granted bail Court in 2009
Hon. Paulinus Igwe	Arraigned on 158 state counts	Former Members of House of Representative	5.2 billion Naira	Remanded in Prison Custody and later granted bail Court in 2009
Iyabo Obasanjo-Bello	Arraigned on 56 state counts	Former Senator	10 million naira	Granted bail in 2008
James Ibori	Arraigned on 170 state counts	Former Governor of Delta State	6.2 billion naira	Granted bail in 2008

Continued

Names	Allegation	Position	Amount	Court verdicts
Rasheed Ladoja	Arraigned on 33 state counts	Former Governor of Oyo State	6 billion naira	Granted bail in 2008
Atiku Abubakar	Misappropriation and Embezzlement	Former Vice President of Federal Republic of Nigeria under Obasanjo's administration	Unknown	Vindicated by the Supreme Court of Nigeria
Bola Tinubu	Allegation for owing foreign bank account while office	Former Governor of Lagos state	_____	Application dismissed by the Court

Source: Author's Compilation.

5. THE PARADOX OF ANTI-CORRUPTION CAMPAIGN IN NIGERIA

The table below shows the various financial scandals that were carpeted by the EFCC as a result of political control and lack of independence of the institution.

Table 7
Unprosecuted Cases of Political Corruption Between 1999-2014

Name	Allegation	Position	Amount
Olusegun Obasanjo	Unconstitutional withdrawal of funds from federation account	Former President of Federal Republic of Nigeria	2.1 billion Naira
Olusegun Obasanjo	Misappropriation	Former President of Federal Republic of Nigeria	\$16 billion
Olusegun Obasanjo	Bribery to elongate his tenure (The National Assembly members were bribed to pass a law for extension of his political tenure popularly known as Third Term Agenda)	Former President of Federal Republic of Nigeria	23.45 billion Naira
Olusegun Obasanjo	Illegal acquisition of shares	Former President of Federal Republic of Nigeria	200 Million Naira
Olusegun Obasanjo	Raising of funds while in office for personal accumulation (construction of private library)	Former President of Federal Republic of Nigeria	8.5 billion Naira
Olusegun Obasanjo	2007 Election rigging	Former President of Federal Republic of Nigeria	_____
Sunday Afolabi	Embezzlement (The Minister was alleged of defrauding the government in collaboration with SAGEM. The funds was meant for National Identity Card was siphoned by the Minister and the company mentioned above)	Former interior Minister	81.4 billion Naira
Salisu Buhari	Certificate forgery	Former Speaker of Federal House of Representative	_____
Andy Uba	Money laundering	An aide to former President Olusegun Obasanjo	Undisclosed
Adolphus Wabara	Bribery	Former Senate President	\$400,000
Late Chuka Okadigbo	Personal enrichment, Abuse and misuse of power	Former Senate President	_____
Late Evans Enwerem	Misappropriation	Former Senate President	_____
Stella Oduah	Misappropriation and abuse of office	Former Minister of Aviation	643 million Naira
Goodluck Jonathan	Fallacious Arms scandal between Nigeria and South Africa	Former President of Federal Republic of Nigeria	US\$15 million
Goodluck Jonathan	Diversion and illegal withdrawal of petroleum funds (Exposed by Lamido Sanusi, the former Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria)	Former President of Federal Republic of Nigeria	\$US20 billion
Farouk Lawan	Member of House of Representative	Bribery	\$US620,000
Kastina-Alu	Abuse of office and Judicial corruption	Former Chief judge of Supreme Court	_____
Diezani K. Alison-Madueke	Misappropriation and embezzlement	Former Minister of Petroleum	£13 billion

Source: Author's Compilation.

The above table shows how the past regimes thwarted prosecution despite alleged grand corruption that satirized the institution of government. According to Human Right Watch (2007, p.44) the former president, Olusegun Obasanjo was entrapped in corrupt activities especially in his pursuit to advance third term agenda. The allegation include illegal withdrawal of 2.1 billion naira from federation account, raising of 8.5 billion naira for his personal library, acquisition of larger share in Transcorp Corporation, unfounded privatization of Nigeria's three refineries, misappropriation of \$16 billion meant for electricity supply among others (Ikejiaku, 2013, p.22; Sahara Reporter, 2007; Adegbamigbe, 2009; *ThisDay Live*, 2015).

Another school of thought, Adegbamigbe (2009) asserts that, "the Transcorp matter was so serious that the late Chief Gani Fawehinmi, the human rights lawyer, dragged the former president to the Code of Conduct Bureau. He wanted Obasanjo tried over the activities of Transcorp and his shareholding in the company seized or forfeited to the federal government as provided for in item 18(2)c of the Code of Conduct for public officers contained in the fifth schedule, part 1 of the 1999 Constitution". His political administration was also alleged of unlawful withdrawal of 2.1 billion Naira without the consent of National Assembly and Nigerian populace negates the constitutional provision of Section 80(3) of 1999 that emphasized that no money shall be withdrawn from the federation account without the approval of the law makers. Invariably, the launching of Obasanjo's library on 15th of May 2005 which generates 8.5 billion also raises divergent opinions about combating corruption. The former president was accused of exonerating corruption by using executive office to amass wealth from political allies and benefactors (Sahara Reporter, 2007). Thus, Ikejiaku (2013, p.22) opines that the library was an "extortion and constructive corruption"

Subsequently, some key political figures attached to Obasanjo's political cabal were also protected by the EFCC, including Diepreye Alamieseyigha, former governor of Bayelsa state, Andy Uba, an aide to former President Olusegun Obasanjo, Salisu Buhari, former Speaker of Federal House of Representative, three former Senate presidents, Adolphus Wabara, late Chuka Okadigbo, Evans Enweremu as well as Andy Uba, who served as a close aide to Obasanjo during his regime. Andy Uba was accused of money laundering in the USA, despite this allegation, EFCC repudiates further prosecution of the presidential aide (Human Right Watch, 2007, pp.48-51).

The corruption cases against the above mentioned political office holders were carpeted by the EFCC and government in power; this is because, the accusers belonged to the same political assembly with the former

President Olusegun Obasanjo. In this regard, the numerous allegations raised against Obasanjo and his political cronies were capped by the EFCC. Correspondingly, all the levels and arms of government were crippled with corrupt practices. Even the 774 local governments in the country were considered as "stealing factories" during his regime (Iheduru, 2014, pp.540-541). Additionally, Obasanjo's financial treaty with the family of the former late dictatorial president that looted the public treasury symbolizes the absurdity of anti-corruption project embarked on by the regime. His fellowship with the state looters could be considered as an opportunity to preserve the status quo and political trend in looting public funds. The anti-corruption agency was served as a siege for corrupt political office holders (Ovienloba, 2007, p.43).

The functionality and institutional leadership of EFCC under Umaru Musa Yar'Adua (2007-2010) suffered a lot setback due to the untimely removal of EFCC chairperson, Nuhu Ribadu (*The Times of Nigeria*, 2007). It is believed that the reason behind his removal was as a result of prosecution of James Ibori, the former Governor of Delta State who was alleged of stolen approximately £55 million by the EFCC. James Ibori was a close political associate of Umaru Musa Yar'Adua (BBC News, 2012; *The News*, 2014). Hence, led to the emergence of Farida Waziri in 2011, as a new chairperson of EFCC (*ThisDay Newspaper*, 2011). From the above, it can be argued that the appointment of Farida Waziri as a chairperson of EFCC showcased how Nigerian politicians provide opportunity for their loyalists to manage public institution.

Under Goodluck Jonathan's political dispensation (2010-2014), EFCC chairperson, Farida Waziri was fired in order to restore his political associate (*Vanguard Newspaper*, 2013); and this opportunity gives room to the emergence of Ibrahim Lamorde, as a new Chairman of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) (*ThisDay Newspaper*, 2011). Despite the replacement of the chairperson, EFCC was silenced to deal with corrupt public officials. This was evident in numerous cases of financial misappropriation, including prevention of EFCC to investigate Minister of Petroleum, Diezani .K. Alison-Madueke, Stella Oduah, former minister of aviation, Abdulrasheed Maina, chairman of pension reform among others. The former president prevented EFCC from performing its constitutional role (News Punch, 2015). It is in light of politicization of anti-corruption agency that it was postulated that: "*In a climate of unpunished corruption, any laws enacted or any agencies created for the benefit of the people can never serve their purposes. They only constitute an avenue for corruption by those entrusted with the implementation and management*" (Nigerian Tribune, 2009).

Table 8
Anti-Corruption Institution and the Cases of Political Persecution

Name	Allegation	Position	Amount	Court verdicts
Atiku Abubakar	Misappropriation and Embezzlement	Former Vice President of Federal Republic of Nigeria under Obasanjo's Administration	\$40 million	Vindicated by the Supreme Court of Nigeria
Bola Tinubu	Allegation for operating while office	Former Governor of Lagos State	Unknown	Application dismissed by the Court
Abubakar Hashidu,	Misappropriation, Embezzlement, abuse of office	Former Governor of Gombe State	Unknown	Discharged by the court
Chris Ngige	Embezzlement and inflation of contract	Former Governor of Anambra State	46 billion Naira	Indicted by the EFCC and later freed by the Court

Source: Author's compilation.

From the above table, the various political office holders that were not in support of former President Olusegun Obasanjo's third term agenda were indicted. The anti-corruption institution (EFCC) was employed as a political instrument to punish them. Those that were indicted include former vice president, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar under Obasanjo's administration and some political office holders such as State governors. According to Human Right Watch (2007, pp.48-51), those who were enlisted in the EFCC book were found to be opposition to Obasanjo's elongation of tenure. "The way this instrument worked is that a person that the president perceives to be a political opponent could be accused by the EFCC". Once the accusation is made, fabricated information can be levelled against the political fellow (News Express, 2013; Byrne et al., 2010). The former vice president, Atiku Abubakar was identified as one of the political oppositions that wrestled with Obasanjo's political protraction. Therefore, the attempted allegation against the former vice president, Atiku Abubakar and his supporters was considered as a "political conspiracy" by the former President Obasanjo. The conspiratorial machination involved Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the instrument was utilized to disqualify the former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar from contesting presidential election (Ploch, 2010, pp.12-13; Falola & Heaton, 2008, p.272). The strategy was to use section 137 subsection 1 of Nigeria's constitution to stop his political ambition which stipulates that: "*A person shall not be qualified for election to the office of President if he has been indicted for embezzlement or fraud by a judicial commission of inquiry...*" (Nigerian, 1999 Constitution, section 137(1)). However, the Supreme Court of Nigeria dismissed the petition as baseless and unconstitutional. The Court held that "section 137(1) of the 1999 Constitution does not confer on INEC the power to disqualify any candidate from contesting election, either expose, or by necessary implication. Moreover, there is nowhere in the constitution where any such power is conferred on

INEC to disqualify any candidate" (Eme, 2009; BBC News, 2007). Thus, the political environment was a clear manifestation of political persecution under Olusegun Obasanjo's administration.

It is believed that the EFCC was employed as an instrument to deal with political enemies (Albin-Lackey & Rawlence, 2007). The agency was adopted to make selective harassment, evident in various apprehensions of political elites that frustrated the third term agenda of former President Olusegun Obasanjo, as it was mentioned earlier. The EFCC becomes a political weapon to silence political opposition that blockaded Obasanjo's third term political contestation. In this context, anti-corruption agency can be used in any country where there is a prevalent of corruption to witch-hunt political enemies (BBC, 2006). Goodluck Jonathan also followed the step of Olusegun Obasanjo by using the anti-graft agency to chase political competitors. The case of Nwokocha, who serves as coordinator of Buhari's campaign committee reflects the political manipulation of EFCC by the government in power to persecute opposition (*The Sun Newspaper*, 2015). The above political scenario reveals how the anti-corruption agency can be coalesced and jockeyed for political gain. Obasanjo's political administration utilizes Economic and Financial Crime Commission to extend his tenure; his action reflects negation of fundamental principles and legal framework for political conducts in the country. The former President Olusegun Obasanjo serves as the founder, executor and controller of anti-corruption institution during his regime. Therefore, it can be argued that lack of independent of the agency provides a congenial environment for political control in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

Examine to what extent anti-corruption institution (EFCC) becomes an effective instrument in shielding the looters as well as for political persecution. I draw from the analytical framework of anti-corruption paradoxes to showcase numerous cases of political corruption that were

concealed by the EFCC as a result of political control of the ruling elites. Politically, there are numerous challenges which create an ominous ambience for anti-corruption crusades in a country like Nigeria. First, the character of Nigeria's state was built on the substratum of ethnicity. The convergence of two variables, that is, ethnicity and politics, provide a plethora opportunity for political elites to loot public resources. Habitually, it manifests in ethnic consideration for job allocation, appointments, and political candidate selection. Consequently, the political elites walk around the existing ethnic pedestal to support their ethnic cohorts through distribution of looted national resources. Second, it is a device in the hand of the incumbent regime to intimidate political opposition, as it distinct political leadership of Nigeria's fourth republic. Political office holders that opposed Federal government policies and third term agenda of former President Olusegun Obasanjo were witch-hunt through the instrumentality of Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), ostensibly to serve as a punishment for the political enemies. Concomitantly, high profile corruption cases of the political loyalists of the regimes were carpeted by the EFCC, therefore, serves as one of the factors that hoodwinked anti-corruption campaign in the country. Third, the Nigeria's anti-corruption institution (EFCC) was created by the corrupt ruling political class and managed by the looters, for that reason, posed a challenge in achieving its primary objectives. The bond that exists between the government that created it and the agency itself constitutes a difficult socio-political climate that tarta its independence.

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) failed to yield the expected result between 1999 and 2014 in Nigeria; this is because, the political elites adopted corrupt strategies to combat corruption. It can be noted that despite the allegation of corruption levelled against some political juggernauts including former presidents, Olusegun Obasanjo, Goodluck Jonathan and their political cronies, none of them was prosecuted by the agency. Drawing from the above political atmosphere, it can be argued that numerous regimes appointed their political loyalists who might serve in favour of the President to manage the affairs of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). The issue to be raised in the above political scenario is that, it would be difficult to have effective anti-corruption agency in a political environment where the president has constitutional power to appoint the Chairman of anti-corruption institution. It has implication on absolute autonomy, effectiveness, functionality and efficiency of the agency. Therefore, it is difficult to have a transparent, unpoliticized and unprejudiced anti-corruption institution in a country like Nigeria. To ensure optimal performance of the institution, the creation of special Court that will deal with the issue of corruption is inevitable; people with unquestionable character such as retired judges who have

delivered remarkable judgments in Nigeria should be appointed to manage the institution, and also, the selection should be championed by the National Judicial Council (NJC) without interference of the President and other political paraphernalia.

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